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are easily applied and blend well together; the production of a pleasing and harmonious effect being facilitated in many ways by the process of Herr Keim.

OLD PERSIAN CARPETS.

WENTWORTH BULLER has been for some two years making investigations into the history and modes of manufacture of Oriental carpets, both ancient and modern. Until these investigations began, he had supposed all carpets to be of wool, and for a year or more sought in vain to imitate a Persian carpet, till at last having recourse to a microscope in order to ascertain the real material of the finest specimens, he found that the hair of four animals had been used. These were the common and the Bactrian camel, the yak, and the long-haired goat. It became clear at once why English attempts to imitate Oriental carpets had failed, it being impossible to produce the same effect from two distinct materials. It was also made clear why a Persian rug in use for years will show no signs of dirt or grime, while a carpet with long wool is soiled in a season. The stiff goat's hair cannot retain grime, while dust shakes off from it at once. The finest hair is difficult to obtain, and equally difficult to dye and spin, but it forms the larger part of the finest carpets, the colors of which are unaltered after several hundred years of use. Mr. Buller finds the chronology of carpets quite as easily settled as that of illuminated manuscripts, each century having its own types of ornament. A Persian carpet of the fourteenth or fifteenth century is a real work of art, having the same relation to an ordinary carpet that a picture of Titian has to a third-rate canvas in an auction-room. Then workman and designer were one, and the distinct separation of the two to-day is one reason for the failure in reproducing anything even approaching the old forms in merit. One carpet described in full required ten hours a day for twenty years, and could not be manufactured to-day for less than \$20,000, and the carpets of the fine period have many of them 500 to 775 stitches to the inch, being worked on silk warps, with often the introduction of gold or silver thread.

ARTISTIC PIANOFORTES.

As our readers are doubtless aware by this time, next to our grievance against the makers of the hideous cast-iron stove we are especially concerned about the ugly piano-cases which the manufacturers continue to give us, resolutely ignoring the demand for something more in harmony with the progressive art spirit of the day. One of these days, perhaps, some one of the leading firms will show enterprise enough to pay an artist a fair price for an original design. Competing houses would be compelled to do the same, and the much-needed reform would be accomplished. It is even possible that one of them may awake to the wisdom of offering a handsome premium for the best design. In the meanwhile, we beg to submit for their consideration the models illustrated herewith as showing the possibilities in the direction we have indicated. In this generation of wealth and prodigal expenditure in the decoration and furnishing of the home, is there one pianoforte made in the United States to compare in artistic grace with the modest little Italian spinet of the sixteenth century, shown on the opposite page? If there be, it has not been our fortune to see it.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we ask for more "ornament." Far from it. The less "orna-

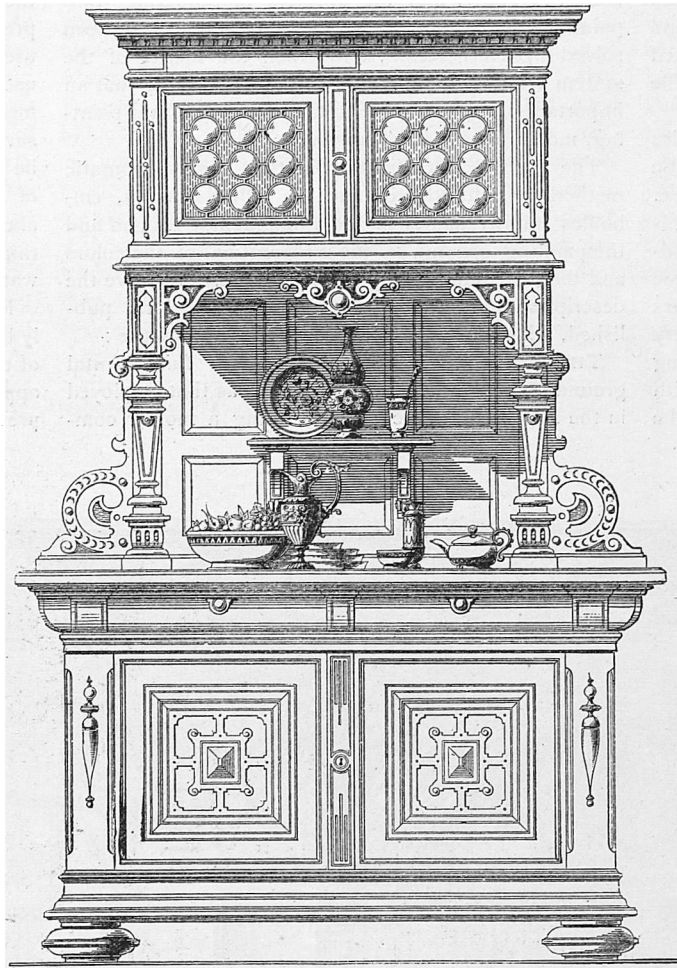
ment" one has of the kind known by that name to the trade the better. Such "carving" as is usually produced by the wretched artisans entrusted with that branch of the decoration of the instrument is an abomination. What is most needed is good construction. The frame might be of oak or walnut, stained or oiled, instead of highly varnished as now seems to be the universal rule. Give it straight, slender legs—we are

was adopted, the curves and lines being those conditioned by the length of the strings.

The outside of the case, the cover, and stand, were painted in oil, in quiet harmonies of olive green and brown; in panelling round the case were disks, wherein were portrayed the story and fate of Orpheus and Eurydice. On these designs the painter bestowed his well-known talent; the incidents in the earthly and lower region, with the death, at last, of Orpheus, being all told in lighter and most delicate tones of color. The top of the cover was enriched with a bold design of the oleander foliage; at the wider end was a muse, emerging from a winged circle and handing to a poet, recumbent beneath her, a theme, "Ne oublie," the motto of the owner of the instrument, while the poet recites a poem from the Vita Nuova.

Outside all was sober; inside all was brightness; the soundboard and iron framing, the desk, and recess round the keyboard, being entirely gilt, while, when the cover is raised, a vivid allegorical painting is visible. The soundboard is covered with roses, all painted by Mr. Jones; and rose-leaves blow about, singly or in heaps, over the diapered pattern which, also painted in oil, covers the gilt metal plate.

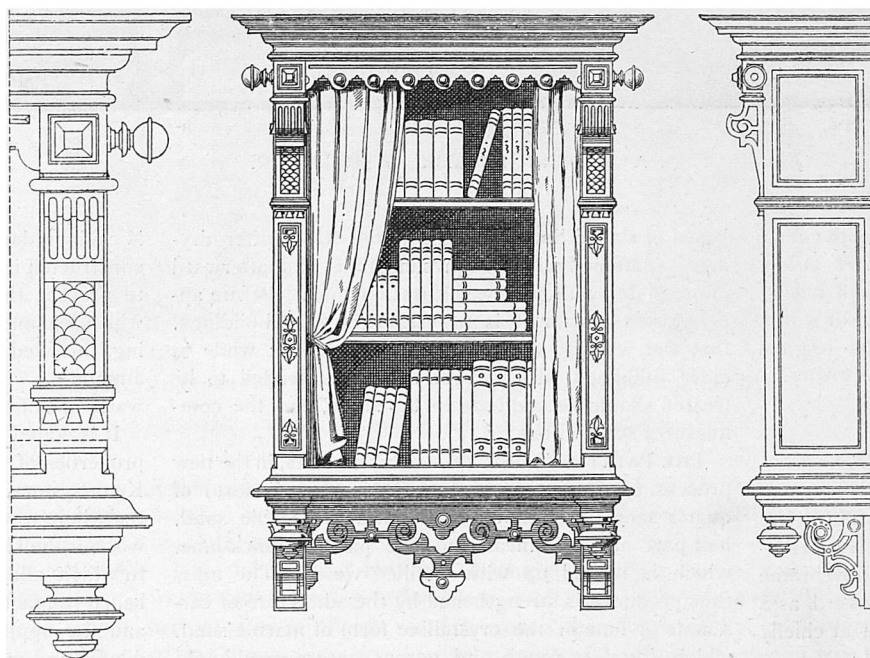
A former piano designed by Burne Jones had the case of oak, full of delicate figure, and stained with a transparent stain a beautiful shade of olive green, the variations in the wood allowing of a subtle play of light and shade. The dark or chromatic keys, instead of being black, were stained a vivid green-blue, striking at once a splendid harmony, akin to discord, with the fine olive of the case. This pianoforte was more fully described in our columns about a year ago, as was also the famous one of Alma Tadema. This latter, also a grand, was carried out under the immediate direction of that artist for himself. It was altogether of a different cast, being a combination of polished oak and ivory, with inlays of darker woods. Both the structural formation and the scheme of decoration partook of that sumptuous and massive character which one naturally associates with the architectural portions of Alma Tadema's pictures. The Assyrian or Egyptian "motif" of the supports, and of the equally massive music-seat with its solid ivory enrichments, was distinctive, and the result successful from a practical point of view.



SIMPLE DESIGN FOR A SIDEBOARD.

(SEE PAGE 44.)

speaking particularly of the cottage piano—instead of the ponderous curved ones common now. The general form, in fact, should be trim and graceful instead of squat and ungainly as it is usually found. As a model for a "grand" pianoforte the second



SIMPLE DESIGN FOR A BOOKCASE.

(SEE PAGE 44.)

illustration shows some strong points in construction.

In the grand pianoforte, designed by Burne Jones and made by the Broadwoods in London recently, the old harpsichord notion of a music-box upon trestles

out of the matrix it has thus formed, and comes away easily. All that now remains to be done is to plane down the veneer left untouched by the zinc, until a thin shaving is taken off the portion forced into the walnut, when, the surface being perfectly smooth, the operation

A NEW METHOD OF INLAYING WOOD.

A NEW method of inlaying wood has been contrived by a furniture-manufacturing house, the process of which is as follows: A veneer of the same wood as that of which the design to be inlaid consists—say sycamore—is glued entirely over the surface of any hard wood, such as walnut, and allowed to dry thoroughly. The design is then cut out of a zinc plate, about one twentieth of an inch in thickness, and placed upon the veneer. The whole is now subjected to the action of steam, and made to travel between two powerful cast-iron rollers of eight inches in diameter, two feet long, two above and two below, which may be brought within any distance of each other by screws. The enormous pressure to which the zinc plate is subjected forces it completely into the veneer, and the veneer into the solid wood beneath it, while the zinc curls up